

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 25, 2015

Agenda Item: Termination of the Blackfoot River Closure Rule (near the I-90 Bridge)

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

The purpose of the Blackfoot Closure Rule was to address on-going public safety concerns on the lower Blackfoot River associated with anticipated changes in river bed elevation and exposure of timber and other mill-related debris and the Interstate-90 Bridge Piers. FWP feels Region 2's goals are accomplished in terms of awareness and that river has settled enough since the dam removal that the hazards have decreased significantly. This rule was set to expire two years from the day of adoption, which was May 22, 2014. Allowing the rule to expire without further action would mean a twenty-two day closure in 2016 that is unnecessary.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Public comment was accepted on the original biennial rule from April 4-April 18, 2014. Forty comments were received. This rule was not contentious. If the Commission passes this item today, a public comment process would be initiated, to be followed by a final decision at a later Commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

1. Leave the rule as is and there will be a twenty-two day closure in 2016. The rule will expire without further action on May 22, 2016.
2. Approve to terminate the Blackfoot Closure Rule, avoiding the unnecessary closure.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP Region 2 feels the rule's goals are accomplished. Awareness is high, the river has settled since the dam's removal and hazards have decreased significantly. FWP recommends that the rule be terminated before May 1, 2016.

Proposed Motion

I move to terminate the Blackfoot Closure Rule as recommended by FWP.